

2652939

Registered provider: Loyal Care Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

A private organisation runs this children's home. It is registered to provide care for up to five children with social and emotional difficulties and who may have suffered from severe trauma.

The registered manager left on 28 December 2021. The responsible individual is overseeing the home while a new manager is recruited.

Inspection dates: 11 and 12 May 2022

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account inadequate

How well children and young people are helped and protected inadequate

The effectiveness of leaders and managers inadequate

There are serious and/or widespread failures that mean children are not protected or their welfare is not promoted or safeguarded and the care and experiences of children are poor and they are not making progress.

Date of last inspection: not previously inspected

Overall judgement at last inspection: not applicable

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
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Not previously inspected		
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Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: inadequate

This is the first full inspection since the home registered with Ofsted in November 2021. The inspection was bought forward due to several safeguarding concerns. The management team is depleted. The registered manager left the home in December 2021 and there is no deputy manager. The responsible individual has attempted to cover the manager's role himself. However, due to support staff vacancies, he also covers shifts. This has led to multiple managerial failings and safeguarding concerns at this home.

Matching and impact assessments have been completed using a software package prior to the children moving in. A lack of detailed information has led to the responsible individual accepting a child without considering the impact on the child already living at the home. As a result, the matching process has not been effective and has failed to ensure that the children are suitably matched to live at the home together.

Children are not attending school or engaging in educational activities. Children are not encouraged with their home learning. Staff do not appreciate the relevance of informal learning; therefore, they are missing opportunities to help the children with their educational development. Staff have not helped children to understand the importance or value of education. Consequently, children have not made progress in this area.

Children's individual health needs are not being met. Staff have failed to seek medical advice in relation to a child's continual refusal of their prescribed medication. Referrals to specialist services have not been actioned. The staff took steps to address this during the inspection. However, this lack of prioritising health concerns has led to delays in treatment for the child.

Staff use incentives with the children to reward positive responses and behaviour. Extra time on consoles or the internet and day trips can be earned. These incentives are used to encourage the children to get up in the morning and keep their bedrooms tidy. Children regularly attend the gym, go swimming and go to the cinema. These activities provide the children with positive community inclusion.

The home is modern and well maintained. The kitchen and lounge are homely and provide a welcoming environment for the children to spend time with adults. The garden is large enough to accommodate the trampoline, a hammock and barbecue. However, the garden is overgrown and in need of attention. This detracts from what is otherwise a very pleasant outside space.

How well children and young people are helped and protected: inadequate

Children are not safeguarded effectively. Serious incidents have occurred at the home. On occasions, children and staff have been injured during highly volatile situations. There has been extensive damage caused to the home. Staff respond and attempt to de-escalate these situations. However, during several incidents the staff have called for police assistance. This has led to a reliance on the police to manage difficult situations and increased the likelihood of children being criminalised.

The responsible individual has failed to ensure that staff are trained and equipped to provide safe and effective care for the children. Staff do not possess the skills and knowledge to recognise the risks posed to children. Staff have not received 'Prevent' duty, county lines and mental health awareness training, which are presenting risks for one child. Lack of staff understanding has meant that staff have failed to take appropriate action and reduce the risk of children being engaged in unsafe behaviours and situations.

Behaviour management plans and risk assessments are inadequate, as they lack details and are not updated following incidents. Children's plans are contradictory in guidance for staff. For instance, one child's missing-from-care protocol was not consistent with the child's risk assessment for unsupervised time. This contradiction in guidance meant that staff were not consistent in how they responded when the child left the home on their own.

Conflict management is ineffective. Debriefs with children fail to address the direct impact that the children's actions can have on others. There are few recorded conversations in which staff have spent time talking with the children, to improve their understanding of respect and how to treat other people. Children regularly use racist and discriminatory language towards adults. The staff do not consistently challenge these discriminatory behaviours. This has the potential to lead to serious incidents at the home and in the community.

The responsible individual has ensured that safe recruitment processes have been followed. Agency staff details have been verified by the responsible individual. Records held by the home provide assurance that appropriate safeguarding checks have taken place.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: inadequate

Leadership and management are inadequate. There are multiple failings at this home. Newly appointed staff have differing experiences of induction. Some new staff only have a few shadow shifts before they support the children. The responsible individual has failed to ensure that the staff understand and apply the home's statement of purpose. Lack of leadership and management has meant that staff are unclear about the home's overall aims and the outcomes it seeks to achieve for the children.

Managerial monitoring is weak. Fire records fail to show what remedial actions from the fire risk assessment have been completed. Records fail to demonstrate whether the children were shown the fire evacuation procedure when they first moved in. There are gaps in the children's risk assessments and shortfalls in the monitoring of incidents. This lack of managerial oversight reduces the opportunity for action to be taken to keep children safe and to make continuous improvements to the quality of care.

Feedback from external professionals and a parent is concerning. Social workers raised frustrations about communication. They are not informed of serious incidents or kept up to date on their child's welfare. External professionals and a parent raised concerns about the responsible individual's and staff's ability to keep their child safe at the home and in the community.

Staff receive supervision. However, this does not extend to the agency staff who provide continuous cover at the home. Children's imminent needs take priority; therefore, there has only been one team meeting. This means that staff are not getting the support and guidance that they need at a time of high pressure.

On occasions, the responsible individual has failed to notify Ofsted of serious incidents. Such delays affect Ofsted's ability to have effective oversight of the home.

What does the children's home need to do to improve?

Statutory requirements

This section sets out the actions that the registered person(s) must take to meet the Care Standards Act 2000, Children's Homes (England) Regulations 2015 and the 'Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards'. The registered person(s) must comply within the given timescales.

Requirement	Due date
In meeting the quality standards, the registered person must, and must ensure that staff— seek to secure the input and services required to meet each child's needs. (Regulation 5 (b)) In particular, ensure that staff make contact with and referrals to external professionals to arrange assessments and support for children as soon as possible.	20 June 2022
The education standard is that children make measurable progress towards achieving their educational potential and are helped to do so. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that staff— support each child's learning and development, including helping the child to develop independent study skills and, where appropriate, helping the child to complete independent study; help each child to understand the importance and value of education, learning, training and employment; promote opportunities for each child to learn informally; help a child who is excluded from school, or who is of compulsory school age but not attending school, to access educational and training support throughout the period of exclusion or non-attendance and to return to school as soon as possible. (Regulation 8 (1) (2)(a)(ii)(iv)(v)(viii))	4 July 2022

In particular, ensure that staff support educational activity throughout the day and advocate for children's return to education provision as soon as possible.	
The health and well-being standard is that— the health and well-being needs of children are met; children receive advice, services and support in relation to their health and well-being. (Regulation 10 (1)(a)(b)) In particular, ensure that staff seek immediate medical advice in relation to children's health needs.	20 June 2022
The positive relationships standard is that children are helped to develop, and to benefit from, relationships based on— mutual respect and trust; an understanding about acceptable behaviour; and positive responses to other children and adults. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that staff— help each child to develop socially aware behaviour; encourage each child to take responsibility for the child's behaviour, in accordance with the child's age and understanding; help each child to develop and practise skills to resolve conflicts positively and without harm to anyone; communicate to each child expectations about the child's behaviour and ensure that the child understands those expectations in accordance with the child's age and understanding; strive to gain each child's respect and trust; de-escalate confrontations with or between children, or potentially violent behaviour by children. (Regulation 11 (1)(a)(b)(c) (2)(a)(ii)(iii)(iv)(v)(viii)(xi))	4 July 2022

In particular, ensure that staff are consistent in their response to children's behaviour, challenge discriminatory behaviours and use restorative practices.	
The protection of children standard is that children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that staff— assess whether each child is at risk of harm, taking into account information in the child's relevant plans, and, if necessary, make arrangements to reduce the risk of any harm to the child; help each child to understand how to keep safe; have the skills to identify and act upon signs that a child is at risk of harm; manage relationships between children to prevent them from harming each other. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)) In particular: ■ ensure that staff receive training in the 'Prevent' duty, county lines and mental health awareness ■ update children's risk assessments and plans after incidents; and ■ understand and act on information in children's relevant plans.	20 June 2022
*The leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children's home that— helps children aspire to fulfil their potential; and promotes their welfare. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— lead and manage the home in a way that is consistent with the approach and ethos, and delivers the outcomes, set out in the home's statement of purpose;	20 June 2022

ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child; ensure that the home has sufficient staff to provide care for each child; ensure that the home's workforce provides continuity of care to each child; use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)(c)(d)(e)(h)) In particular: ■ review the leadership and management of the home to ensure that there is sufficient management capacity to provide effective management, oversight and monitoring of the home ■ ensure that staff have the necessary skills and knowledge and receive appropriate training to provide effective care for children ■ ensure that individual children's risk assessments and behaviour management plans contain all relevant information and are kept up to date ■ ensure that all records contain accurate information and are up to date; and ■ ensure that the home is led and managed in accordance with the home's statement of purpose.	
The care planning standard is that children— receive effectively planned care in or through the children's home; and have a positive experience of arriving at or moving on from the home. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that children are admitted to the home only if their needs are within the range of needs of children for whom it is intended that the home is to provide care and accommodation, as set out in the home's statement of purpose.	4 July 2022

(Regulation 14 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)) In particular, undertake thorough impact and matching assessments before a child moves into the home.	
The registered provider must appoint a person to manage the children's home if— there is no registered manager in respect of the home. (Regulation 27 (1)(a))	4 July 2022
The registered person must notify HMCI and each other relevant person without delay if— an incident requiring police involvement occurs in relation to a child which the registered person considers to be serious; there is an allegation of abuse against the home or a person working there. (Regulation 40 (4)(b)(c))	20 June 2022

* This requirement is subject to a compliance notice.

Recommendation

- The registered person should provide a nurturing, homely environment. In particular, the manager should ensure that the garden is well maintained. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards, page 15, paragraph 3.9)

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people, using the social care common inspection framework. This inspection was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000 to assess the effectiveness of the service, how it meets the core functions of the service as set out in legislation, and to consider how well it complies with the Children's Homes (England) Regulations 2015 and the 'Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards'.

Children's home details

Unique reference number: 2652939

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Loyal Care Limited

Registered provider address: 38c High Street, Leiston IP16 4EW

Responsible individual: Catalin Condurat

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspector

Rachel Watkinson, Social Care Inspector

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